

From the Army Acquisition Executive

Protecting the Force by Protecting Information

Force protection is an awesome responsibility — one that we in the acquisition, logistics and technology community take very seriously. We continue to work very effectively with our sister services and our industry partners to ensure that our Soldiers have the weapon systems and equipment they need to successfully fulfill their missions around the globe and here at home.

Our Rapid Fielding Initiative ensures that all units deploy with the latest available equipment. Likewise, our Rapid Equipping Force works directly with operational commanders in the field to find promising technology solutions for identified operational requirements — at times within hours or days, not weeks or months. We continue to work closely with industry to ensure that our Soldiers have life-saving body armor and that their combat platforms have the ballistic protection required to safeguard them from improvised explosive devices, rocket-propelled grenades and other life-threatening devices. We are doing everything possible to ensure that our Soldiers throughout the world accomplish their missions successfully and decisively, and then return home safely.

As important as all the above are to ensuring the safety of our men and women in uniform, this edition of *Army AL&T* is focused on another aspect of protecting the force. It's centered on the ways that we protect our forces by providing them with the right amount of information, at the right time and the right place to allow rapid decision making for decisive battlefield victory. Information systems are major factors contributing to today's success in the global war on terrorism and in other operations throughout the world. Systems such as the Army Battle Command System, Force XXI Battle Command Brigade-and-Below, Blue Force Tracking and others dissipate the "fog of war" and provide our commanders and their forces with visibility that enables them to execute attacks on the highest payoff targets, at the most opportune times and with the most effective weapons. These systems also enable us to distinguish friend from foe, and allow logistics and supply forces to maintain a constant flow of materiel to our troops.

Throughout history, commanders have sought to leverage information to achieve decisive advantages over their enemies. A profound historical example that comes to mind is Enigma, an electromechanical cipher machine owned by the Germans during World War II. They considered it absolutely impenetrable, even if captured by enemy forces. They were wrong. The Allies' ability to intercept and decode the Germans' messages were major contributing factors to ultimate Allied victory in Europe.

Then, as now, information is power. We know that we must maintain the technological edge over our adversaries not only



in weapons, but also in the way we communicate and exchange information on the battlefield. We must have assured information dominance across the entire spectrum of conflict. Today, our forces are the most aware, most well informed military in history. Our troops can execute a multitude of missions simultaneously and seamlessly with enormous success.

Still, we must ask ourselves, "How do we know with certainty that the information our forces have and use is not being gleaned in some way by adversaries who are determined to hurt American men and women in uniform?" Our adversaries are cunning, resourceful and adaptive. Therefore, we must conclude that information superiority across the battlespace can be fleeting, if we let it be.

Thus, in this Information Age, we must determine how long we should protect information. Do we protect it at all costs? Our current strategy evolved during the Cold War and many now believe that it is time to overhaul our approach to gathering and retaining information. Arguably, we should assume that everyone — most especially our adversaries — either has, or will have, the information we hold.

If we take the approach that the enemy has the information we have, what tactics, techniques and procedures must we use to regain information superiority? If our acquisition process, funding process or sustainment process is impacted, do we continue? At this point, there are as many questions as there are answers. Nevertheless, potentially compromised information is a critical concern for our combatant commanders and their Soldiers.

In the end, we must have 100-percent secure communications capability, and the ability to prevent any adversary from getting inside our databases to manipulate or destroy sensitive information. We are making tremendous progress in information security as our Future Combat Systems' "system-of-systems" move toward highly integrated network-centric operations. Our Soldiers' lives depend on the acquisition community fulfilling its mission to deliver seamless and secure communications connectivity.

I urge you to read the excellent feature articles that follow for new insights into how the Army is maintaining a decisive technological advantage and protecting the force by protecting information.

Claude M. Bolton Jr.
Army Acquisition Executive